A MASTERPIECE.

By ELISABETH PULLEN.

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Maurice Ingraham strayed into Goupil's, as he did nearly every day, in order to indulge in a quarter hour of homesickness for the paradise of art from which he had been exiled by means of a rich legacy. When one falls heir to the estate of a childless uncle worth several millions it deprives him of the delicious makeshifts and economies and excursions of the guild of painters. It has been said that champagne tastes and a beer income are a cause of miseries. But an income which seems to constrain to champagne all the time might prove equally oppressive. Ingraham was conscious that the men who had worked beside him in a certain famous studio in Paris, now that he was rich, tried very hard to treat him in the old cordial way. But he felt the patronage of art toward money, which is loftier than that of money toward art.

That morning he spied at Gougil's a photograph of moderate dimensions, a landscape signed by a former fellow student of his, Victor Forsythe. Their friendship had continued, but pallidly and intermittently. Forsythe had married; the wife was said to be a very nice girl, but not at all of the smart set. Ingraham had sent a rather expensive wedding gift and had meant to pay a visit. Then he heard that the Forsythes were out of town for the summer. Evidently the artist had profited by his vacation; the photograph from his painting showed a work of rare quality. It was a riverside meadow, with a clump of willows; the stream had shadowy depths and luminous eddies; some sheep were pasturing in the foreground. Nothing could be more simple and serene than this idyllic landscape—yet Ingraham's first impression was of something grandiose. After a moment this quality disappeared; but if he turned away his gaze and then looked afresh at the picture it always made the same effect upon him. He decided that it was something about the background; there were vague, large curves, perhaps of clouds or of distant hills; at all event, they were extraordinarily imposing in their faint and tenuous suggestions of immensity.

"There is one vulgar consolation reserved for the bondholder," said Ingraham humbly to himself. "He can buy what pleases him and at the same time encourage art."

He at once decided to lunch at an Italian restaurant frequented by the painter clique who liked to recall the impressions of a sketching tour that they had once made in a body to Rome and to talk of the coloring of the great

HE SAW FORSYTHE QUITE ALONE AT A TABLE.

Campagna, the unspeakable grandeur of the ruins, the good taste of the wines of the country, which they drank under the vine trellises of a little osteria. As Ingraham entered the restaurant he saw Forsythe quite alone at a table. He crossed the room and greeted him.

"If you are not expecting anyone, Forsythe, will you lunch with me? This is rather like sora Clelia's, isn't it?"

"A fair imitation. But we miss the fellow with the guitar and worthy old Clelia, who would sometimes bring a dish with her own hands in order to say to us 'good appetite, my children!'"

"Ah! the dear old sora Clelia!"

They mingled reminiscences until it appeared to Ingraham that it would not be an impertinence on his part to begin to talk about the painting that he wished to buy.

"Forsythe," he said, "I have just seen at Goupil's the photograph of a most remarkable picture of yours. It is wonderful, beyond praise. You have struck a new manner, and your first manner was the despair of the rest of us. But this landscape is great. Let me say plainly, and get over the crudeness of the situation, that I want to buy the original. They said at Goupil's that they had not seen it, and did not know whether it was sold or not. If it is I shall try to get it away from its present owner. I must have it at any price."

"I am glad that you like the painting. But the original is not for sale."

"Indeed, I cannot wonder that you are in love with it yourself, and wish to keep it. But could you let me have a replica?"

"Possibly."

"You would have no objection to copying it for me on another canvas?"

"As you say."

Ingraham drew out his check book, signed a page, tore it off and handed it to Forsythe.

"Oh, carte blanche is too much," protested the artist.

"Too little, by Jove! I want that landscape. I have ordered one of the photographs framed and sent to my rooms; but, of course, it must lack the touch and the colors of the real thing—the silvery green of the willows, the olive depths and the amber lights of the water, the blue of the marsh lilies and of the heavens above them—"

"I painted it in monochrome."

"But you hit the values marvelously. What was the tint?"

"Well, a kind of reddish brown."

"Not sepia?"

"No."

"Burnt sienna?"

"Not exactly."

"Umber?"

"Well, hardly."

"All right, the coloring is your little secret. But I have not yet spoken of the real wonder of your work, Forsythe. Willows and streams and sheep feeding have been seen before now. But there's more to it than that. You have painted in there some great dim curves. They are more than human; they are titanic, as if you had seen for one inspired moment the great earth-mother herself behind her creation—something, as Swinburne says: 'The solemn slope of mighty limbs asleep.' I am bound to admit, however, that now you see it and now you don't," noted the rich man, ashamed to be caught in a rapturous citation of poetry. "Anyhow, Forsythe, that picture is like a glimpse into the morning of the world, the primeval myths."

Whereupon the artist laughed gayly, filled out the check with very moderate figures and handed it back to Ingraham.

"You shall have the replica, my dear fellow; but I don't take the money beforehand. Thank you for all the nice things you have been saying. But, upon my word, I'm not responsible for the titanic curves. They were accidental—no, not that, either—incidental. They were, in fact, caused by the particular canvas, so to speak."

"Nonsense, that cannot be so. However, to content you, I will admit that you painted better than you knew."

"Yes; that picture was the result of the habit of handling a brush. Neither more nor less."

"Forsythe, you used not to have these little affectations. Don't try to make me believe that a man can paint like that without a real inspiration. You divined, you saw that prodigious curve, as of a colossal beautiful shoulder. It may have been originally a mountain or a cloud; but you have softened and made it mysterious—a thing to worship."

"Come, no, I will tell you all about it, because it will really not do for you to keep on raving about a stroke of non-existent genius. Well, this was the way of it. Mrs. Forsythe and I went away for our wedding trip as far as the state of Maine. We visited the great lakes—which they modestly call ponds there—we plunged into the pine wilderness and turned up among the too compendious scenery and civilization of Mount Desert. At the end of our vacation we stayed a few days in the city of Portland, and while there we made a little excursion in a horse-car to a pretty village with an old English name. The conductor was friendly, and advised us to walk along a road until we should come to a milldam; there we should find a little steamer ready to take us three miles upstream to the log boom.

"The place was charming. It had an air of exquisite remoteness. Of course, a highroad, houses, a milldam, a steamer and various smart canoes near a boathouse seemed to testify to the neighborhood of human beings. But the stream and its shores, lovely bits of level meadow with shady copses of willow and alder, the complete stillness, except for the impertinent puffing of the little launch, were like a a virgin country. My wife and I wished to enjoy it to perfection, so we disembarked at the log-boom and told the captain of the steamer that we would wait over a trip. He answered that if we came again to the boom within an hour and forty minutes that would connect with his boat and with the car back to the city. So my wife and I strayed over the meadows and wished that we had brought the sketching outfit, and then sat down on the grass and made all sorts of plans for our future."

"And the majesty of the distant mountains slowly impressed itself upon you as they loomed in the background?"

"Not at all. I do not think that there were any hills in sight. We were so engrossed that we did not notice the uprising of a bank of threatening clouds"—

"Ah, I see! It was their outlines"—

"Outlines nothing! It was their wetness, their profuse, inopportune, wrung-out-from-all-the-sponges-of-the-sky wetness! In a moment we were soaked, our shoes squelched, the color of the blue cornflowers in my wife's hat dripped down upon her neck. We were a sight to see. I fancy that the captain of the launch thought of our plight and made all haste to rescue us—but the time seemed long to us. However, we tried to take it as a joke. But the jocularity ceased the next day, when my wife developed a case of acute bronchitis. A physician was called, who pronounced it a trifle, if treated promptly. He prescribed a mixture for the cough, and told me to paint her back, between the shoulders, with iodine.

"So with a phial of tincture of iodine and a small camel's hair brush I set to work. My anxiety for her was relieved, the impression of the beautiful solitary landscape that we had seen was fixed upon my mental retina—and, first that I knew, I was painting that scene in iodine monochrome on the shoulders of my patient! I declare to you, Ingraham, I had completely forgotten that I was not painting on canvas, instead of a human surface, like 'chicken skin, delicate, white,' as Austin Dobson sings of the Pompadour's fan. My wife wondering at the length of the application, at last inquired: 'But have you not almost finished, Victor?' And I, still oblivious, replied: 'A few more touches, and it will be ready to frame.' She gave a funny little hoarse shout of laughter—my wife had a sense of humor. Then I, too, saw the joke. She ran to the dressing table, and, by means of a hand-mirror, surveyed her shoulders. 'Why, this is a lovely landscape!' she said. 'It is too good to lose. Find my kodak, Victor, it is in one of the trunks, and photograph your masterpiece before it begins to fade out.' She was delighted; the iodine and the fun together soon cured her cold, so that in a few days we came home to New York.

"Of course I had the photograph enlarged, and it succeeded so well that I placed a few copies in Goupil's, hoping that some of my friends would like them. The original painting has long since disappeared; I shall make your replica from the photograph. And I shall try to recall the silvery greens and the somber olive-browns which you rightly attributed to the landscape."

"But all this does not account for those grandoise, superhuman curves, the visible presence of the earth-goddess."

"Ah, I rubbed down the outlines all that I could. But it is not easy to obliterate in a photograph. Those curves—I told you they were owing to the shape of the canvas. My wife's shoulders, of course, came out large in proportion to the landscape painted on them. She is not titanic, nor even, perhaps, a goddess. But she is an extra nice little woman, all the same."

HE HATED WOMEN.

Bachelor of Vienna Used to Buy Three Seats at the Theater.

There are so many sham misogynists about in this affectedly cynical age that one can hardly help extending a measure of admiration to the thoroughness and consistency of a certain rich old Viennese bachelor, whose death was announced the other day.

In the case of this highly eccentric old gentleman, horror and dread of our unfortunate sex had become a positive mania, for it is recorded of him that whenever he went to a place of public entertainment he took the precaution of booking three seats, in the center one of which he seated himself, leaving those on each side vacant, so as to avoid all risk of being obliged to sit next to a woman!

He even carried his extraordinary craze beyond the grave, by leaving instructions that no woman was to be buried either to the right or left of him, even if it should be necessary to purchase three graves in order to insure the carrying out of his strange behest.

Perhaps the most curious thing in the whole strange story is the statement that this agreeable old gentleman left behind him a large bundle of letters, which he had grimly indorsed: "Attempts made by my family to put me under the yoke of matrimony."

As he appears to have been a very wealthy man, this alleged action on the part of his relatives seems by no means easy to explain.—Lady's Pictorial.

An Impatient Girl.

Mr. Richmann—You have a handsome young man named De Ribbon in your employ, I understand. He is engaged to my daughter, and I'd like you to do me a favor."

Merchant—Certainly, my old friend. Want him advanced, eh?

"No. I want him kept just where he is until my daughter gets tired waiting for him to be able to marry."

"Um—how long will that be?"

"About six weeks."—N. Y. Weekly.

—A young woman whose husband lately died was forced to repress her tears and wear a smiling face, because, as she said, she "hadn't a handkerchief fit to be seen, except one," and that she had to "keep for the funeral." Such command over the feelings, from a sense of higher duty, is very rare and very impressive.

A HEAVY RANSOM.

To judge by his haggard looks and the monotonous way in which he was pacing up and down the room, Hon. Robert Spenceley was evidently under the influence of a serious mental depression when his particular chum, Tom Langton, favored him with a morning call.

"Halloa! What's up, Bob? By Jove, you are looking seedy."

Hon. Robert stopped in his purposeless walk, languidly extended his arm, lightly touched the tips of his friend's fingers, and heaved a deep and bitter sigh.

"Are you ill, chappie, or has the peerless, patrician Penelope—"

"Sit down, Tom. The fact is, I've been a fool."

"And how did you discover it?"

"Well, as you know, I've been mixed up a bit with Lord Templeton and his set. Jolly fellows, but inclined to go the pace a bit too fast. Hang me, I if can say 'No' to anything they propose, and the upshot of it all is that in two nights I have lost upward of three thousand pounds sterling playing cards at the Junior Aborigines — at least, that's the amount they hold my I O U's for."

"What confoundedly bad luck you must have had!"

"I posted down to the family nest yesterday, laid the whole affair before the governor, and vowed that I would never touch a card again if he would help me out of this scrape."

"And he has refused?"

"Point blank. He reminded me that on several occasions he had paid off my legitimate debts—small in comparison to this one—but he considered playing cards for high stakes so outrageously foolish that he could not and would not help me. I told him they were debts of honor, but he said it was a most dishonorable way either of making or getting rid of money.

"In conclusion, he told me that as it was most desirable that I should break off from this connection, he proposed to reduce my allowance to five hundred pounds a year, during which time I am to travel and see as much of the world as I can on a paltry ten pounds a week."

"And what did you say?"

"What could I say? I have no choice in the matter. I have made up my mind that I will not go to the money-lenders, and so I must get these fellows to wait until I can redeem my paper."

"Look here, old chap. I'll come with you for a time, and we'll go in for a walking tour."

"Tom, you are a brick. Let us start this week."

Three months had elapsed since Robert Spenceley's departure, during which period frequent communications—each bearing expressions of regret for the past and promises for the future—kept Lord Nethwick fully acquainted with his son's doings. The absent one seemed to be thoroughly enjoying himself, judging from his graphic descriptions of the scenery and incidents of the walking tour. Then the letters ceased altogether.

Several times lately the doubt had arisen in Lord Methwick's mind as to whether he had not been too severe, remembering that his son had hitherto borne an irreproachable character, evincing a deep dislike to all the worse forms of dissipation, and there was no doubt that this unfortunate affair at the Junior Aborigines was not the result of inherent or newly-acquired viciousness, but rather brought about by a false position, in which, surrounded by companions of wealth and repute, he had been led away by the excitement and his inability to say "No."

Now that no news came from him, his father's resolution rapidly gave way under the disquieting influence of foreboding and the continuous entreaties of his mother, until at last his recall was decided upon so soon as the next intimation of his address should arrive. The next letter did disclose his whereabouts, and this was the—thunderbolt.

"MOST ILLUSTRIOUS SIGNOR—The sea of your excellency is doing us the honor to condescend our humble hospitality to partake and has to us your address given so that we may impart his well being. He now his departure desires, but we would that your illustrious excellency to us sending the sum of pounds four thousand Englische that we may be solaced for his loss." Then followed an address to which a communication was to be sent, and the missive concluded: "Any information to the gendarmes will be on the son of your excellency. (Signed) GIUSEPPE."

Giuseppe! The most noted bloodthirsty and brigand of modern times, about whose cruelties and tortures so many harrowing tales were told by travelers, and upon whose head a heavy price had been set long ago.

Lady Methwick piteously besought her husband to send the money at once.

"They will kill my darling boy, and you—you—will have sent him to his death!"

Her daughters, Hon. Agatha, Ondine and Clovis, added their agonized entreaties; indeed, so carried away were they by their feelings that they actually offered to go without new hats and dresses for the next twelve months, in order to contribute to the ransom money. But his lordship did not believe in giving way at once. Doubtless a lesser sum would be accepted, and while negotiations were in progress and there was a chance of the ransom being ultimately paid, he did not think his son would be in any danger. So he sent an offer of two thousand pounds sterling. The reply to this was a curt refusal, and a postscript added in Robert Spenceley's handwriting was: "Father, send soon; feel sure they will not take less." But still Lord Methwick would not give in without effort to reduce the amount, and he increased his offer to two thousand five hundred pounds sterling.

The day came when Giuseppe's reply was due, but it did not arrive, and pent-up anxiety caused his lordship two sleepless nights and two miserable, irritable days. On the third morning, amongst the contents of the post bag was a small parcel, the handwriting of the address of which was immediately recognized. With trembling fingers Lord Methwick tore open the package, and there lay disclosed the bold brigand's staggering reply—a cardboard box containing a man's ear packed in sawdust, and inside the lid these words were scrawled:

"No less than four thousand. Part of his excellency is sent free so that he may hear your decide which was final."

In after years that day always remained impressed with startling vividness on his lordship's memory. What with his wife's continual fainting fits; his three daughters in consecutive hysterics, their conscious intervals being employed in upbraiding him in such severe terms that one would have thought that the poor man had himself cut his son's ear off; his own mental anguish as he remembered that the future head of his house would never be able to hear both sides; the horrid possibility of getting the wanderer back for nothing—a piece at a time, and the fear that at that moment further tortures might be in course of infliction—he often marveled, not only that he survived it, but that reason did not altogether forsake her tottering throne.

And the climax was reached when, in the softening shades of twilight, Lady Methwick and her three daughters, dressed in black, went in solemn procession to a distant part of the grounds, where, beside a rippling stream and beneath a spreading tree, the gardener had already dug a grave. There, with fresh bursts of tears and passionate sobs, the box of sawdust with its precious freight was solemnly buried, and a cairn built over and about its resting place.

The outgoing evening mail carried two letters, one to the brigands agreeing to their terms, the other to a friend of the family, who happened to be a consul in the near neighborhood, inclosing a draft for four thousand pounds, and begging him to put himself in instant communication with Giuseppe and obtain the captive's release.

The consul did as he was desired, and, in compliance with instructions from the robber band, who were evidently taking every precaution against being trapped, proceeded alone one evening, carrying a parcel of four thousand sovereigns to an indicated spot on the outskirts of a forest. Here he was met by a sunburnt, black-bearded giant, picturesquely attired in his native dress, who carried a rifle, while a couple of revolvers and a poniard adorned his sash. Motioning to the consul to follow him, he proceeded but a few paces into the forest, then halted and blew a long, low, peculiar whistle on his fingers.

Approaching footsteps were immediately heard, and there emerged from among the trees the whilom prisoner, alone. As he ranged up to the side of his deliverer, the gold was handed over, carefully counted, and then, with a low bow, the robber turned on his heel, at once disappeared, without having uttered a word, and the consul and his purchase were free to depart.

Methwick hall was ablaze with light on the evening of the heir's return to his ancestral home. The female portion of the family had spent the day in alternately laughing and crying for joy, and were now in a state of intense excitement, anxiously awaiting the return of the carriage from the station. Presently the sound of wheels was heard drawing up to the door, and mother and sisters rushing out, fell upon Robert, hugged him and kissed him and half-dragged, half carried him into the house, but it was not until after they had been for some time assembled in the library that there flashed across their minds the remembrance of that horror that lay buried beside the stream. His mother first made the discovery.

"Why, Robert, you have two ears!"

"Two ears, mother! Have I not always had two?"

"But we buried one of them."

Hon. Robert was evidently in the dark, and when they explained he declared (truthfully) that he knew nothing about it. As a word-painter he proved a decided failure, considering the adventures which they expected him to recount. He had nothing to relate, simply monotony waiting for the ransom, and, no matter how they plied him with questions, he could tell them nothing of the doings of the gang, for he said he never saw any of them except the one who had him in charge.

A few days after his return, pleading the necessity of a visit to a West End tailor, he traveled to London, after receiving strict injunctions and giving a promise to shun his old haunts and companions. Arrived in town, he at once proceeded to Tom Langton's chambers, and his first words to his chum were:

"I say, Tom, what about that ear, and why wasn't I told of it?"

"Well, I thought you might object, and as it was desirable to bring things to a climax, I got it from the dissecting room at the hospital through a student."

"It took me quite by surprise when they accused me of having two ears, and told me they had buried one of them. But how about the money?"

"I have told the fellows that you have negotiated a loan and empowered me to pay your debts. Here are the I O U's that I have bought up, and the total amount is about £2,996. The remaining £1,004—"

"You will please keep for yourself, as arranged, for the double purpose of paying you for your trouble and buying your perpetual silence."

"Thanks, old chap. I will be silent as the grave; but, I say, I had a difficulty in keeping silence when we had her majesty's consul in the forest. I never wanted to laugh so much before."—Tid-Bits.

—Margaret of Parma was large, mentally and physically. Her features were strong and coarse, her voice masculine, and she had a hairy upper lip and chin. One of her contemporaries calls her "a man in petticoats." She cursed and swore like a man, and finally died of gout.

MAKING RUBBER GOODS.

American Waterproofs Better Than English, But Have an Unpleasant Odor.

"For some reason, rubber overcoats, mackintoshes and waterproof garments made by English manufacturers will not stand the American climate," said a man who has made the study of rubber goods his chief business for years. "The English goods are what is called acid-cured," he continued, "while the best American dealers vulcanize their garments by means of the dry-heating process, subjecting them to a certain degree of steam heat, in an air-tight compartment, for over twelve hours. A year or two ago a certain firm in New York laid in a supply of English garments from a trustworthy factory, which it cost them one dollar and ninety cents to import. The entire invoice turned hard, sticky and absolutely unsalable on their hands, although they had only been in stock a short time. They were glad to sell them off at auction at ten cents apiece."

"What is it that makes rubber capes and coats have that disagreeable odor peculiar to them?" questioned the listener.

"They have that smell because they haven't been deodorized," was the reply. "All the leading rubber factories in the country deodorize their goods. Manufacturers of cheap goods do not take this trouble, and the compound which it is necessary to mix with the rubber in order to make it pliable and yielding is bound to have an odor if the garment is not so treated. A certain herb common to China, Japan and other eastern countries, an herb which the Chinese in New York smoke in little sticks, as we do cigars, is used to deodorize rubber goods. Tier upon tier of finished garments are hung in an air-tight apartment and subjected to the fumes of this herb or weed. After a thorough fumigation of this kind, not the slightest scent or odor can be detected on the goods.

"Of course," added this authority, "if people buy any of the common rubber garments sold at one dollar and eighty cents and two dollars apiece, they will find much to complain of in their purchase. Not only will the garment have a disagreeable odor, but it will not be waterproof. It will be merely a protection against cold, and will contain a very small modicum of rubber in its composition. One can easily see how that is by thinking a little on the subject.

"One of these so-called rubber coats weighs at least two pounds. A fair quality of 'para,' which is the technical name given to rubber in the trade, sells at seventy-five cents a pound. It would be impossible for the garment sold at less than two dollars to contain much para at those figures, to say nothing of the cost of cutting and making. There is a vast difference between the old fashioned white-back, single-surface rubber coat and the ideal rubber coat of to-day. In the last eight years, especially, great improvements have been made in the manner and making of rubber goods. Now the best garments are double-textured, that is, the rubber compound is contrived between the outer and inner surface, although all are cemented together.

"I have worn out three pairs of rubber overshoes this season, and have just bought a fourth," said a young woman. "I wonder why they wear out so fast?"

"I can tell you," said the expert, taking the new rubbers in his hand and examining them. "There is a little separate piece of rubber which we call the 'cording' missing from these shoes. All the old-fashioned rubbers had this cording put in between the sole and the upper just where the pieces joined. In order to secure a more elegant-looking rubber shoe the manufacturers have recently left off putting in this cording. The experiment has proved a gain in the matter of appearance and a distinct loss in the matter of durability, but the consumer forced the manufacturer to it, because the demand is always for shapely looking goods at whatever cost. I predict that in a season or two that clumsy but necessary cording will be reinstated to overshoes. One would scarcely credit it, but a woman's rubber shoe is made up of nine separate pieces. Sometimes when a rubber shoe cracks across the toe it is because it has been overheated or overbaked. It is in the process of vulcanizing that the different parts of the shoe are thoroughly united, but the temperature of the heater has to be adjusted with great judgment and discrimination according to the grade and kind of goods to be treated.

"The vulcanizers consist of huge wooden boxes covered with sheet tin on the inside and filled with steam pipes, the doors of which are hung at the top. After they have been filled the steam is turned on and the goods sujected to its peculiar power, the degree of heat being carefully regulated by means of thermometers seen from the outside through small windows. Everybody has studied about the wonderful rubber tree which grows so profusely in Africa, South America and other hot countries. They remember that the cream-like sap it yields is hardened by the natives into big balls, like rosin, and that afterward, when melted and mixed with a certain compound, it is coated on to the cloth which is to be made waterproof. It is in the compounding of this mixture to be worked into the malleable gum or rubber that the whole secret of the business lies. Manufacturers do not feel that perfection has even yet been reached in regard to the mixing of these compounds. They are trying to reach perfection in the art and for this purpose they go on experimenting and substituting this, that and the other ingredients for those long in use, in order to attain some yet more satisfactory. The public is occasionally the victim of these experiments, but the repeated efforts and failures will effect good in the end."—N. Y. Tribune.

—Friendship is the shadow of the evening, which strengthens with the setting sun of life.—La Fontaine.